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PRESS RELEASE

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Follow-Up Workshop on VEF Reports and Interviews for 2008 VEF Fellowships

Hanoi, July 27, 2007 – The Vietnam Education Foundation (VEF) announces the working visit to Vietnam by a delegation of U.S. scientists and technical experts from August 1-14, 2007 to conduct a follow-up workshop on VEF reports and to interview candidates for VEF Fellowships for the 2008 Cohort.

The workshop entitled “Opportunities for Enhancing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education in Vietnam: A Forum for the Discussion of VEF’s Reports on Undergraduate Education in Select Fields” will be co-organized by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), the Vietnam Education Foundation (VEF), and the U.S. National Academies (NA) in Hanoi on August 2-3. The workshop will be facilitated by six U.S. experts who co-authored the VEF reports. The target audience will include leading decision makers from MOET and from higher education institutions in Vietnam. The purpose of the workshop is to review recommendations made in the VEF reports, to discuss the relevance and feasibility of these recommendations with respect to Vietnam's system of higher education, and to identify innovative approaches, pilot projects, and partnerships that can be implemented to improve the quality of science and engineering education in universities in Vietnam. Discussion topics at the workshop will include teaching methodology, curriculum development and course content, student and faculty evaluation, faculty development and advancement, and research in undergraduate and graduate education. The outcome of the workshop will be a series of improvement plans for follow-up projects. “We hope that this workshop will lay the foundation for major changes and improvements in Vietnam’s system of higher education, especially with respect to curriculum and teaching methodology,” commented by Dr. Ray Gamble, Director, Fellowships Office, the U.S. National Academies

Following the August 2-3 workshop, Dr. Peter Gray, an leading expert on Academic Assessment and Faculty Enhancement, will conduct a series of workshops on enhancing higher education teaching, assessment, and planning methodologies at six universities located in Hanoi, Danang, and Ho Chi Minh City. These workshops will be conducted from August 6-13.

Concurrently with Dr. Gray's workshops, sixteen U.S. scientists will conduct oral exams/interviews to select the most talented candidates for the final round of the selection process for the 2008 cohort of VEF Fellows. These candidates have been chosen from more than 1,000 applicants through various rounds of the selection process. In addition to the 113 VEF Fellowship candidates, the U.S. scientists will also interview 28 candidates for MOET's 322 scholarship program at the request of MOET, which is emulating the application and selection process of VEF. MOET and the National Academies plan to work closely together in future years with the goal of awarding up to 250 scholarships each year for Vietnamese students to pursue graduate studies in the U.S. While in Vietnam, the U.S. delegation will also conduct scientific lectures at universities and research institutes in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

A press conference regarding "VEF – The U.S. National Academies - MOET cooperation on the enhancement of higher education in Vietnam" will be held on August 3 at 5:30 p.m. at the Sofitel Plaza Hotel in Hanoi.

Referring to these activities, Dr. Vo Van Toi, Executive Director of VEF, said, "VEF continues to play an important role of assisting Vietnam to further develop in science and technology. With the close cooperation of the U.S. National Academies and the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training, we will select a new group of outstanding and ambitious young Vietnamese to give them a first class educational opportunity and at the same time implement novel and sustainable capacity-building projects for Vietnam."

Importantly, on this occasion, MOET will present to VEF the official operating status to its representative office in Hanoi. "We greatly appreciate VEF's efforts and have facilitated its operations related to the development of science and technology in Vietnam. With this new operating status granted to VEF, we look forward to even a closer and more fruitful relationship and cooperation between MOET and VEF in carrying out more significant joint projects and programs of mutual interest in the years to come," commented Vice Minister Tran Van Nhung.

VEF (www.vef.gov) is a special initiative of the U.S. Congress to bring the U.S. and Vietnam closer through educational exchanges related to science and technology. VEF is governed by a Board of Directors whose thirteen members consist of three U.S. Cabinet members—Secretary of State, Secretary of Education, and Secretary of Treasury; two U.S. Senators; two U.S. Representatives; and six Presidential appointees. The Foundation is in its fifth year of operations and incorporates assistance from the U.S. National Academies in developing and executing VEF programs. As its flagship activity, the VEF Fellowship program has placed 230 Fellows at more than 60 top U.S. graduate institutions, mostly for doctoral degrees. VEF Fellows are required to return to Vietnam after completing their academic programs in the U.S.